

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 981

Recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, established to increase awareness of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 2008

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. SESSIONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

RESOLUTION

Recognizing March 6, 2008, as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, established to increase awareness of glaucoma, which is the second leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States and worldwide.

Whereas glaucoma is a progressive disease of the optic nerve, robbing individuals of both peripheral and central vision;

Whereas glaucoma affects all age groups, including infants, children, and the elderly;

Whereas glaucoma disproportionately affects underserved minority populations, with African-Americans having a three times greater risk of developing this disease than White Americans, and it is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss in African-Americans and Hispanics;

Whereas glaucoma is the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States, afflicting 2,200,000 Americans, and it is the leading cause of permanent blindness worldwide, afflicting 67,000,000 persons;

Whereas awareness is absolutely crucial, as glaucoma often has no symptoms until vision loss occurs, and it is estimated that, in the United States, more than half of the individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have it and, in developing countries, 90 percent of individuals with glaucoma are unaware that they have it;

Whereas with early diagnosis and ongoing treatment, 90 percent of the cases where blindness occurs can be avoided and awareness is crucial, so that individuals with known risk factors for glaucoma and those over the age of 40 should have regular, comprehensive eye examinations that include careful evaluation of the optic nerve and measurement of eye pressure;

Whereas, the National Eye Institute (“NEI”) within the National Institutes of Health (“NIH”) has been a worldwide leader in glaucoma research, elucidating the genetic basis of different types of the disease (including risk factors) and the potential for gene therapy approaches, identifying factors that can protect the optic nerve from damage, evaluating the potential for optic nerve cell regeneration, and better understanding how elevated intraocular pressure leads to optic nerve damage and how pressure-reducing drugs ultimately developed from NEI-led research can reduce glaucoma progression;

Whereas adequate Federal funding is needed at the NEI for research to prevent, diagnose, and cure glaucoma-related vision impairment and blindness, which disproportionately affects underserved minority populations; and

Whereas the public needs to know the insidious nature of glaucoma, that there are means for detecting and treating it to save sight, and the importance of compliance associated with those treatments, and the first-ever World Glaucoma Day is an observance planned to increase global awareness in that regard: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the United States House of Rep-
2 resentatives—

3 (1) recognizes the first-ever World Glaucoma
4 Day;

5 (2) supports the efforts of the National Eye In-
6 stitute within the National Institutes of Health to
7 fund research on the causes of glaucoma, including
8 genetic and environmental risk factors, glaucoma
9 prevention, the relationships between damage to the
10 optic nerve and loss of vision, societal and individual
11 impacts, diagnostics, and treatment to save and po-
12 tentially restore sight; and

13 (3) congratulates the American Glaucoma Soci-
14 ety for its efforts to expand awareness of the preva-
15 lence and economic burden of glaucoma, as well as
16 the continued need for federally funded research into
17 the disease, through congressional visits recently
18 conducted.

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